

Global Update

African Connections

Satellites, fibre optics and wireless networking will be used to connect 53 African countries to India in an ambitious tele-medicine and tele-education project. Ten superspeciality hospitals (3 in India and 7 in Africa) will be connected by the e-network. One of the main goals is online training programs for nurses, para-medical staff and other health workers. The tele-medicine hub is already set up in Bangalore and the tele-education hub in Ahmedabad. Two universities in India and 3 in Africa will connect 53 learning centres for tele-education. The tele-education centres will have post production facilities, data centres, and a portal comprising delivery system software (eg content management and digital library solutions). The pilot project was recently launched in Ethiopia at a cost of \$1 billion. The great advantages of online learning are considered to be better quality, increased access and low cost. India has both philanthropic and business interests in Africa and the world is watching to see how this great African experiment will go. (The Tele-trail to

Africa. The Economic Times 14 August 2006, p11).

Goodbye to bird flu

It has been 3 months since the completion of the culling, cleaning and sanitizing process at all the places where avian influenza (bird flu) was reported in India. There have been no fresh outbreaks since then. No case of human infection was reported from India, though 236 cases have been reported world wide with 138 deaths. The government is in the final stages of notifying the OIE (a global organization for animal health) that India is free of avian influenza. The first Indian case was from Jalgaon in Maharashtra in February and India will be putting all the data of testing of all suspected cases on their website so that there is no back tracking. (The Economic Times 14 August 2006, p 21).

Gouri Rao Passi,

Consultant,

Department of Pediatrics,

Choithram Hospital & Research Centre,

Indore, Madhya Pradesh, India.

E-mail: gouripassi@hotmail.com